The Pittsburgh Commercial.

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THE WEEKLY COMMERCIAL.

TERMS OF THE WEEKLY:

How to Talk—Be Short.

I know one man who can be trusted for Mary Mother, her face is so plainly written all that is good. I used to want to make her wrap a blue cloth round her head, as if she were in a picture (I have a genius, and then, if we could only find the picture of the child Jesus that was good enough for her, she should be painted as Mary Mother. Wait, this sweet saint has done better things in life, and will do more, till she is called away, than ever she could do with a brush. Her face has truth and gentleness and loveliness pass into them, and inspire them, and then, with the light and life they have from her, they inspire her. Her own life, and life, she cannot die. For she herself, like all of us, has her limitations. And I suppose the one reason why, with such sincerity and such unbounded benevolence, and such unbounded love, she does not succeed better in her aim, person to person, is that she does not know how to "be short." We cannot all be so, or do all things. The first thing I ever learned in Latin was the sentence *Sacra via Latina*, and see how much better it sounds there than in English. Then send your cousin to the other inn.

I think the first duty of the human being is to live and to eat; and next to that, what we have to say that dinner is ready. Now really the best way for one to say that is "Dinner is ready." The next best is to say, "Dinner is ready, sir, or ma'am, if you're only the cats. Let it, but really it is. Again of whom I speak, the second of that name, and of the Franconi, and Cosmo Hamilton Gordon, and Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart, and Lord Ronald Gower, I wish one may. "I am so glad to see you!" I do not mean to make a point of it, but I am sure it is one of the best things I ever do in my life, when I say that. Formerly I would not say it, I know you would not say it, but I am sure that on the average we say it to each other not more than once in a year. Now, I say it to almost everybody I see, and I mean it. Why should we not? Why should we not say it to each other? Why should we not say it to the whole world? Why should we not say it to the whole world, when it comes to us in the world, that some man is glad to see us? Why should we not say it to the whole world, when it comes to us in Washington, when it comes to us in Boston, when it comes to us in the next car, when it comes to us in the next car but one to the next car, they could hear it on the train, and on the coach, and on the omnibus, and on the steamboat, and on the ferry-boat, and along every street and on the country roads, and in the fields and in the woods, and in the houses. Their only shelter was a pile of rose bushes. A buffalo, an elk, a bear and a mountain sheep was occasionally seen, contributing meagre support for the hunter and altogether insufficient to sustain tribes with them. Their principal food was vegetable, and it appears well for the tactics capacity of the region, that some of the tribes subsisted upon vegetables, and that without bad. Various contingencies in large quantities and in fine while discussion saw some of the Indians digging roots and therefore called them "digger Indians" and some "root eaters" on this side. But was a mistake though. The roots and grains are almost the only items of consumption in that region. The bulb of those roots are each bursting with grains and those grains are dried very much. Those bulbs are gathered easily, and constitute a nutritious, pleasant, and lasting food. Many women and some of the Indians and not those are exclusively vegetarians. The greater part subsisted on the roots alone. The Indians gather them in great quantities and dry them for winter use. Many

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WHICH SHALL IT BE?

No intelligent person will deny the fact that more outrages have been committed during the last year than in any previous year in the history of the country. An absence of attention and barbarous deeds are chronicled daily in the press, from the murder of innocent children to the defilement of the aged and helpless. And in the common practice of outlaws to avoid each other with the knife or pistol upon the slightest provocation. The means for murder has almost assumed the form of an epidemic, from the contemplation of which we withdraw with a shudder. Look where we will, we fail to find any relief from the catalogue of horrors. The appliances of the law prove ineffectual in the attempt to restrain the deeds of violence. Capital punishment, conducted as we have seen it conducted during the past year, has proved entirely abortive. The murders not only keep pace with, but they outstrip the executions. Where, we ask, is the state of affairs going to end?

A few years ago there was an urgent demand for the enforcement of the laws. We were told that murderers were shielded from just punishment by a sentiment, merciful in its origin, made up of the opponents of capital punishment, who contended that the result of a "morbid sympathy" and a "maudlin sentiment," which could only be compared to "placing a premium upon crime." The same spirit that urged the people of Salem to burn witches controls for the time all the elements of reason, and the advocates of the abolition of capital punishment outnod upon the discussion. The exponents of the doctrine which demands "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," have had their own way. There has been a surfeit of judicial hangings throughout the country, but, so far from deterring, as we have already intimated, they seem rather to increase—till now no one cares.

A famous artist states how, in his early efforts, he copied a head successfully that he thought he knew right, and on error in the original drawing. His attention being called to the fact by his master, he could not escape the feeble conclusion, "I know, sir," manifested a portion of the truth can be seen from it, and it was only at the end of the years, or several attempts that he succeeded in pleasing himself. Shall he been ordered to draw an original head, it is not probable that he would have committed but such a grave error. So much for the effects produced by an impression. If there is any merit in impressions, it is to be found in the case with which they are transmitted from individual to individual. It is almost impossible to place a limit upon the process or to see it carried out in human nature. We argue from this that wisdom dictates to be careful how we present such impressions to occupy the mind to the exclusion of healthy, ennobling improvement.

Let us suppose that the law, instead of placing appliances in the hands of its officers for the destruction of human life, should place in the hands of the moral sentiment, something that no power on earth can create, and that no occult human power can interfere with without rendering a law of the Creator. Suppose that all laws should be constructed in such a manner as to heighten and carry out this impression. Then we would have begun to teach the masses in a practical manner, and is it not reasonable to suppose that our long human life would come to be estimated at something like its real value?

We have had a fair trial of the system which license our regard for human life, and the result is not conducive to other good morals, or calculated to establish a feeling of security in the public mind. Would it not be advisable now to adopt such measures as will impress the public with some thing like a reverence for life? Or, must we continue on at the rate we are progressing until we reach a condition of affairs similar to that enforced in the vicinity of Newgate, in the early part of the eighteenth century, when it was not an uncommon thing to begin the week with the hanging of from five to fifteen victims, closing up with a brace of martyrs?

RAILROADS IN COLORADO.

The Springfield, Mass., *Republican* has started an inquiry which ought to be published to an end. We quote:

"But we cannot rise to more to what caused the Pacific railroads to be built. Was it the hope of immediate profit? Was it the expectation of settlement and cultivation of the country? Was it the desire to open up the mineral resources of the mountains? Was it the hope of a speedy return of the money invested? Was it the desire to secure the trade of the Pacific coast? Was it the wish to develop the agricultural resources of the plains

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Alcohol.

The Portmaster at Stilbo, an old Gallowhite, collected under date of December 31st to the amount of 1,000 francs. He was then before the tribunal, charged with having failed to declare that he had in his possession 1,000 litres of alcohol, and therefore evaded the payment of the duties.

Longevity in Massachusetts.

[From the Springfield Republican.]

It may not mean very encouraging to authors after the labor of their lives to learn that the average duration of human life in Massachusetts has been found to be fifty years; but that is the fact, and we need not go to work here on statistics to prove it. Some one has lately made a calculation that the average life of authors is about sixty-three years, and if persons would learn a little more of the laws of life and health for themselves, with a little more self-denial and temperance, with greater moderation in the pursuit of wealth, and with more regard for the future, it is probable that the average duration of human life would be greatly increased. Some one has said

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GOV. GEARY ON EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY.

When Governor Geary, in his last annual message recommended the Legislature to pass a law that would empower the Executive to commute the sentence of death to imprisonment for such a term of years as the circumstances would justify, we were disposed to regard the recommendation with favor. We still think the practical operations of such a law would be productive of great good, even if it did not pave the way for the abolition of capital punishment. Without entering into a discussion of the means by which the bill was finally passed, we are at a loss to perceive the force of the Governor's objection, or the consistency of his course in vetoing a measure devised expressly to meet an emergency he himself pointed out. "We cannot find in his message a single reason for refusing the act that will not apply with equal force to the law which gives to pardoning to exercise the Executive clemency in any case. If "it is unjust to the Executive to compel him to refuse every case unjust to the courts and juries to expose their solemn findings to such irresponsible re-examination," in order to commute the sentence of death to imprisonment for a given term of years, what are we to say of the "irresponsible re-examinations" which are the criminal at liberty? If "there is no fitness in giving the additional discretion to the Governor," we fail to see what fitness there is in the law which empowers him to pardon a convicted murderer. Of the two, we have an hesitation in saying that we prefer the bill he has just vetoed to the law which places the life or death of a condemned criminal at his discretion.

In declaring that "the power of pardon is the prerogative of the State, but the commutation is an exercise of judicial discretion," it seems to us that the Governor swallows at a gnat and swallows a camel. Especially is this noticeable when we are reminded that the "benevolence of the State" can only be displayed in a manner "unjust to the courts and juries" that try the cases. If the law owes its efficacy to the certainty of punishment, and "the pardoning power has itself been fruitful of," then why not welcome a law which by the practical operations will tend more than anything else to do away with the pardoning power? How, we confess, is a matter that we should like to have a little more light on.

THE GALLOWS AS A DEFENCE.

Philadelphia has done a good deal of hanging of late. In fact, Pennsylvania at large has been pretty busy in that line. If the gallows possesses half the efficacy claimed for it, murders ought to cease and this sort of thing end altogether. But the prospect of this bloody business dying out is not flattering. On the contrary, the gallows appears to belong to the order of nongenerables that thrive on that on which it feeds. In other words, we are hearing proof to which no one can close his eyes, that hanging is no cure for murder at all; and there is just enough in our experience to suggest to thoughtful men that it is barely possible that hanging is something that accords so fully with the baser quality of human nature as to stimulate that from which all murders proceed. At any rate, the disposition of Philadelphia appear to be not much struck with the beauty or good influence of the gallows; and pretty much everybody appears to be speaking out concerning it with a loathing, which, if the gallows really be the sacred thing which some claim it is, argues badly for them. We know not how many hangings will work a revolution in the public mind, but we are confident that the more exhibitions there are of men hung while protesting—not with bravado, but with humbleness and humility—their innocence, the community become sincerer deeper and deeper, and the Death Penalty becomes more odious. With the contribution and munificence attending the exit of Twyeman and Rouse, Philadelphia should now in the community which is in a proved moral condition only one degree or two below that of what is claimed for the gallows to be true, the community where a line the most humane ought to be in the most improving way. Lamentably for the argument, the opposite appears to be the fact, and, after all it is most likely that we now have additional reasons for expecting shortly another murderer in the place of Twyeman, or, what is disgustingly "cheaper the gallows." It seems that something like this is expected, for we have the *Press* saying:

> [illegible] that the law has been fully vindicated, and that the community is relieved from the presence of a murderer. But this is not the case. The law has been vindicated, but the community is not relieved. Another murderer will be found to take the place of the one who has been executed. The gallows is a defence, but it is not a cure. It is a defence which society has a right to employ, but it is not a cure which society can rely upon. Society must look for a cure in other directions.

In declaring that "the gallows is a defence," the *Press* is not alone. The community at large has been pretty busy in that line. If the gallows possesses half the efficacy claimed for it, murders ought to cease and this sort of thing end altogether. But the prospect of this bloody business dying out is not flattering. On the contrary, the gallows appears to belong to the order of nongenerables that thrive on that on which it feeds. In other words, we are hearing proof to which no one can close his eyes, that hanging is no cure for murder at all; and there is just enough in our experience to suggest to thoughtful men that it is barely possible that hanging is something that accords so fully with the baser quality of human nature as to stimulate that from which all murders proceed. At any rate, the disposition of Philadelphia appear to be not much struck with the beauty or good influence of the gallows; and pretty much everybody appears to be speaking out concerning it with a loathing, which, if the gallows really be the sacred thing which some claim it is, argues badly for them. We know not how many hangings will work a revolution in the public mind, but we are confident that the more exhibitions there are of men hung while protesting—not with bravado, but with humbleness and humility—their innocence, the community become sincerer deeper and deeper, and the Death Penalty becomes more odious. With the contribution and munificence attending the exit of Twyeman and Rouse, Philadelphia should now in the community which is in a proved moral condition only one degree or two below that of what is claimed for the gallows to be true, the community where a line the most humane ought to be in the most improving way. Lamentably for the argument, the opposite appears to be the fact, and, after all it is most likely that we now have additional reasons for expecting shortly another murderer in the place of Twyeman, or, what is disgustingly "cheaper the gallows." It seems that something like this is expected, for we have the *Press* saying:

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From which it will be seen that Lincoln was nowhere compared with the Ghost, albeit the Ghost's admiration is free of that other odious resemblance to the nursery.

"Who killed Cock Robin?"

The appointment of Governor Curtin as Minister to Russia, will be among the first sent to the Senate. There has at no time since the inauguration been any doubt concerning this appointment, it being understood by the President. It is said that Mr. Motley is booked for England and then Secretary for Mexico.

THE FUTURE OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

The New Brunswick papers publish the resolution introduced in the House of Assembly of that Province in favor of annexation to the United States. The motion was not entertained, but the author and all sources allude to it as a "Solon." The suggestion is based upon the fact that the people of the Province are taxed heavily for the necessaries of life without receiving corresponding advantages; declares that they are disposed to emigrate to the States, and that unless some speedy action be taken to change the aspect of public affairs, the Province will fall into disorganization and decay. The New Brunswick journals discuss the question in a liberal spirit, with a decided inclination to annexation. It appears to be conceded on all sides that the United States is the natural market of the Provinces, and that the American movement did not originate with any one party, but that the idea pervades all parties and all classes.

Unless we are misled by the indications, the sentiments of the people of New Brunswick are shared by those of the other Provinces. The utterances of those Englishmen whose opportunities enable them to speak knowingly of public sentiment in Canada, coincide with this conclusion. The impression that the North American Provinces constitute the most valuable portion of England's Colonial Empire, we are informed, is wholly unsound by a study of the facts and figures, and by the stand the people of the Provinces would, in the event of conflict, inevitably take. It follows that the sooner they come to belong to Great Britain the better it will be for the people, the English Government, and the United States. Under the protection of Great Britain they are becoming bankrupt. No change could affect them for the worse, while the chances are that any change would be for the better. So we have the question narrowed down to Independence or Annexation. It is not probable that the Provinces which have been unable to keep pace with the movements of the age by the aid of Government patronage can accomplish their object when left to themselves. Always supposing upon all they seem to be sensible of the difficulties to be overcome as Independent States. They are not blind to the fact that the United States in that case would discriminate against them, and what they require is a market in which an opportunity to make the most of their material resources. This, the people of the Provinces argue, can not be accomplished without help, and help will come readiest from those who are interested in the development of the country. Thus we see that all the arguments tend towards annexation, and that the chances are that if over this end is brought about, it will be because the people inhabiting the Provinces demand it, rather than as the result of a disposition upon the part of the people of the United States to extend their territory.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION.

We are getting on. We learn fast. We guild to what is inevitable with becoming grace. Negro soldiers give us a shock, from which we at scarcely recovered when emancipation, wholly and at once, struck us with a fresh like chill. This was scarcely recovered from when negro suffrage was proposed and accomplished, not, however, without giving us the shakes, which had not entirely subsided when negro officeholding became a fixed thing, and we are now in a state of relapse into which we threw us. We shall recover however. The Lieutenant Governor of the State of Louisiana, in the person of a negro, named Dunn, has for weeks been received on the floor of both branches of the Legislature, where he has been treated as though he were white. A gentleman of wealth, culture, and elegant manners, color is the only peg to hang an objection on; and that is so short and feeble that it is of little account. Should a negro make his appearance with credentials entitling him to a seat in Congress, it is probable we should survive. In fact, there is nothing more likely, and we shall yet live to wonder that we ever made such a fuss about "the negro."

Times had a day of it in Philadelphia Thursday. Twyeman, convicted of murdering his mother in law and wife, in a confession to his spiritual adviser, a few days ago, undertook to plum the guilt on his wife, and was to have been hung at high noon, cheated the gallows by poisoning himself the night before,—whether or not will be ready to conclude, he confessed his own deep guilt. But the gallows has such, nevertheless. Rouse, confined a shooting Hanover, the pugilist's brother was hung according to appointment, preceding his entire innocence with his latest breath. Hung believe that he spoke the truth. If he did, what atonement can he now or society make for the murder of that man and wife? If, as some strongly maintain, the Death Penalty is a Divine Institution, because of all it was written Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," whose blood shall be shed in recompense for killing the innocent Rouse, in case he was innocent? Rouse's execution was as strictly private as possible, the ministers of the law, and the hangman, thus conceding the barbarism of Capital Punishment.

The people of England are not over sufficient concerning the successor of Benjamin Disraeli as their present active premier would fain to think. The journals are speculating upon the probabilities which will attend the choice of a minister, to be appointed by the Queen of St. Simon. The result of the matter is, that the people of England are devoting more time to the discussion of the settlement of the Alabama claims than the people of the United States. This fact shows which nation has the greatest interest in the final adjustment of the question. Somehow, though, the English find it difficult to comprehend the low figures upon the adhesion of an ambassador than the Government of the American people. In the course of time we expect they will be enlightened on the point. It may take time, but they will ultimately be set right.

Numerous instances the administration has been sadly imposed upon in appointing men to office. In New York one proves to be a regular swindler. He was recommended by a distinguished millionaire who appears not to have known what was his real character. Another is hung up in the Sub ate on the charge of having defrauded a widow and reduced her to poverty. Other cases have come to light—all of which go to prove the necessity of a thorough reform in the civil service, whereby not only deception like that here instanced will be prevented, but the scarcely less reprehensible practice of Congressmen using the patronage of the Government to advance their own interests prominently and politically will be broken up. Under the present system this is next to impossible.

The Government is preparing for a big arrear policy with reference to Cuba and of course Spain. A considerable number of American officers are held as prisoners by the Cuban despotism. Some have been murdered, and Americans have but little security there. The naval force in the West Indies is being rapidly augmented. Orders for getting ready several iron clad monitors, including the *Dictator* and *Canonicus*, were given towards the close of last week. The country will not satisfied that every question growing out of the Cuban revolution will be wisely and promptly treated.

Amusing from the statement of the travelers who have traversed Germany, Nebraska is a readiness to engage in war will be responded to promptly by Prussia, where the greatest activity prevails. Every railroad station has been placed upon a defensive footing. Workmen are actively engaged in the suburbs of Hanover, at Konigsberg, at Minden, Dresden and Bromberg in erecting new defenses. Heaps of timber wood are seen on every side, and on the lines of all the principal roads cars are ready for the immediate transportation of men, horses and war materials at a moment's notice.

The Indian Bureau Ring has been completely broken up, and the business placed in the hands of President Grant, who intends to cut the Quakers to his self. The policy of humanity and civilization, backed with an appropriation of $2,000,000, will be substituted for the starving, demoralizing policy of the past. The progress of the experiment will be watched with deep interest.

Low Life in New York.

Some idea of low life in New York may be obtained from the following, extracted by the Rev. Van Meter in a lecture delivered in Chicago recently. Altogether, three weeks New York last year, 30,000 arrests, fifty-five of which were for murder, averaging a case for every half mile. There were 150 houses of ill fame averaging one to each block. Forty-eight thousand children were running the streets of New York, homeless, homeless and parentless. 120 families were reported in one single tenement building." In the Fourth ward the number of inhabitants to the square mile exceeded 250,000. On this ward the families live below the sidewalk, many of them below high-water mark, and when they are driven from their cellars by the high water, or lie in bed until the tide ebbs. In one tenement house there were 37 persons sick at one time of scarlet fever, scarlatina, measles, whooping cough, and other diseases. In this building one out of every nineteen died. A single block on this ward, containing 1,400 families, one